



REACHING HIGHER, ACHIEVING MORE



INDIANA COLLEGE COMPLETION

2014 REPORT

A clearer and more comprehensive picture
of college completion in Indiana



INDIANA *for* COMMISSION
HIGHER EDUCATION



COMPLETION



PRODUCTIVITY



QUALITY



Introduction: **Indiana's Completion Challenge**

Though education provides greater opportunity at all levels, it's clear that Hoosiers who complete education beyond high school are better equipped for success in the 21st Century economy. The reality is that nearly two-thirds of all new jobs in Indiana this decade will require a postsecondary credential, and those who lack higher education will have limited options for career advancement and upward mobility.

Yet, at a time when a college has never been more essential, many Hoosiers might be surprised to learn that just 3 in 10 students who enroll at an Indiana four-year campus graduate on time and only half finish within six years. The completion challenge is even more apparent at the state's two-year campuses where fewer than 1 in 10 students finish on time and only 12 percent graduate within three years.

Rallying Hoosiers around the common cause of college completion is the foundation of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's strategic plan, Reaching Higher, Achieving More. More Hoosiers than ever before recognize that higher education separates the "haves" from the "have-nots," and Indiana's college completion agenda reflects a growing sense of urgency to increase the percentage of adults with a quality college degree or workforce credential to 60 percent of the state's population by 2025.

Meeting the Challenge

Indiana is embracing its college completion challenge at all levels. Indiana's colleges and universities are creating new innovative programs and financial incentives that promote college completion, including tuition discounts, on-time graduation bonuses, and proactive advising practices that provide the support students need to succeed.

Indiana policymakers also have responded to this call with a performance funding formula that rewards college completion, state financial aid incentives that encourage on-time graduation and new state laws that streamline

college transfer and ensure all Hoosier students have a clear degree map that guides their way to graduation day.

A Closer Look at Completion

An on-time degree will always be the best and most cost-effective path to college completion. At the same time, we recognize that Indiana's completion picture includes not only full-time students who start and finish at the

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same institution but also students who attend college part-time, students who transfer between colleges, students who take longer to graduate and students who earn a different degree type than the one they set out to pursue.

Every graduate brings Indiana another step closer to reaching its 60 percent education attainment goal, and each student must be acknowledged and accounted for in addressing the state's completion challenge.

A closer look at Indiana's completion picture also reveals stark disparities in graduation rates of low-income and minority Hoosier students. There are 20 to 30 percentage-point gaps in completion rates between the lowest-graduation and highest-graduating demographic groups at the state's two- and four-year campuses. In recognition of this challenge, the Commission passed a resolution in 2013 calling on Indiana colleges to cut this achievement gap in half by 2018 and close it by 2025.





About the Completion Report

The Commission for Higher Education is committed to providing a clearer and more comprehensive picture of college completion in order to inform and advance Indiana's collective efforts to boost education attainment.

In partnership with Indiana public colleges and the National Student Clearinghouse, the Commission has collected completion data for Hoosier students who graduate in this state and out-of-state. Each Indiana college profile shows the percentage of students who start and finish at their campus of origin as well as those who complete at another institution or with a different degree over three different time horizons. The second page of each college profile presents disaggregated completion rates to illuminate how completion patterns differ by student population based on income-level and race/ethnicity.

Improving college completion is a complex problem, but overcoming Indiana's completion challenge begins with a clearer understanding of where we are and where we need to go.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the College Completion Reports?

The reports show a more complete picture of postsecondary success than traditional graduation rates, including students who earn a degree after transferring to another college and those who complete a different degree type than originally sought. These students are not included in traditional graduation rates, which typically are limited to students who start and finish at the same college and with the same degree type.

By contrast, a comprehensive completion rate includes all students who earn a degree, regardless of the path or timeline they took to get there. The Completion Reports also spotlight the deeper trends behind the summary numbers, including the disparities in college completion rates among different student populations.

What are the key takeaways from this report?

1. Traditional graduation rates do not provide a complete picture of student success.
2. A substantial number of Hoosier college grads finish at a different college than where they started.
3. On-time college completion is the exception in Indiana with the majority of students taking longer to graduate.
4. Full-time student success rates are significantly higher than part-time student success rates.
5. Racial/ethnic achievement gaps in college completion rates are substantial on Indiana campuses, and larger than gaps related solely to family income level.

Why do completion rates differ so much by campus?

Indiana's college campuses have different missions and admission standards and serve students with differing levels of academic preparation. As such, each higher education institution faces different challenges in its efforts to improve completion rates and student success.

When comparing completion rates, a campus is best measured against its own improvement over past performance. In future versions of the Completion Reports, the Commission will highlight innovative strategies taking place on Indiana college campuses that are producing results in increasing degree completion and on-time graduation.

What is the source of the data in this report?

This report relies on data submitted by Indiana colleges through the Commission's annual data collection process as well as data from the National Student Clearinghouse. It is important to understand that this report represents a snapshot in time and looks back six years for community college campuses (to the class of students entering in 2007) and eight years for the other schools (to the class of students entering in 2005). Future versions of the completion reports will include year-over-year analyses to demonstrate progress over time.

